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GROUP 3600

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)	PATENT
)	
Hans BERGER et al.)	Group Art Unit: 3627
)	
Serial No. 09/854,560)	Examiner: Harle, Jennifer I
)	
Filed: May 15, 2001)	Confirmation 8137
)	
DEVICE AND METHOD FOR)	
MANAGEMENT OF OPERATING)	Customer No. 25269
MATERIALS AND/OR SUPPLIES)	
OF AN ANALYZER OR ANALYZING)	
SYSTEM)	

* * * * *

RESPONSE TO REQUIREMENT FOR INFORMATION

Washington, D.C.
July 19. 2004

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313

Sir:

Referring to the Office Action of May 18, 2004, wherein the examiner has requested further information to assist in searching the subject matter of the invention (Requirement for Information), the applicants reply as follows:

They are not certain what keywords to suggest in locating relevant publications via computer search methods.

They are not aware of electronically searchable databases that can be searched to provide assistance in locating material prior art.

With respect to the foreign citations in the Information Disclosure Statement, filed May 15, 2001, their relevance can be appreciated as follows:

DE 196 18 962 A1 discloses a method wherein individual stock levels are determined by sensors and transmitted to a central site which is responsible for replenishing stocks. The stock levels of the individual articles, for example the height of the stacks of one and the same merchandise, are continually checked by the sensors and the respective data are transmitted to the central site. To save transmission costs, data are transmitted only after a given number of sales have taken place, or, according to another variant, each vending machine is polled for data by the central site. Such systems are not suitable for medical applications.

WO 99/15990 A1 discloses a computerized system for distributing medical products in a clinic. The system is used for the management of medical stocks, and coordinates all information regarding the products distributed, the stock levels and the manufacturers and distributors of the products, and electronically places renewal orders when stocks drop below a certain level. For this purpose, the computer system of the clinic is electronically linked with the computer systems of the product manufacturers and distributors.

WO 98/51991 discloses a computerized automotive service system for exchange and sharing of information on the internet. This document may

show some aspects of pending claims 2 and 3 but is irrelevant with respect to independent claims 1, 19, 21 and 27.

In EP 0 822 473 a remote maintenance system for host computers which are connected to a management host computer are described. The document is irrelevant with respect to independent claims 1, 19, 21 and 27.

The examiner's attention is also directed to the currently submitted Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement which identifies an additional U.S. patent in interest. With regard to this patent, it describes a consumable supplies monitoring/ordering system for reprographic equipment, e.g., for an ink jet printer. The consumable supplies which are administered are, e.g., toners, inks and paper sheets for a plurality of such printers communicating via an inventory tracking system. If at least one of the consumable materials reaches a projected reordering point, information is given via user interface. An operator can then send his orders to a remote order site. That means the disclosed system is only based on quantity information of the needed consumable supplies. Such a system will not be sufficient for analyzers or analyzing systems in the medical field. For at least some of the required supplies (e.g., calibrating and quality control media) not only quantity information is important but also particulars with respect to their types and expiry data (see point a) of claim 1). Further, also operating materials (such as electrochemical or optochemical sensors of

the analyzer) are recorded with respect of their maximum useful life in point a) of applicants' claim 1.

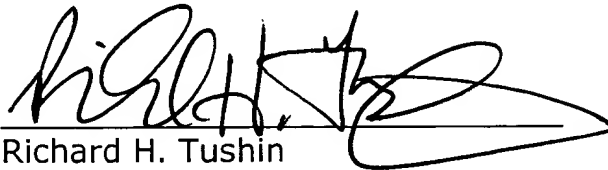
As shown in the description of present invention (page 4, last paragraph), automatic recordation of data after insertion of new sensor cartridges or other supplies is effected by means of a bar code reader or a transponder system, where a memory chip is provided on or in each sensor cartridge or each supply tank. The memory chip, for instance at the container for the calibrating or quality control media can be used for storing the current filling level. (see also bar code reader 5 and transponder 6 of container 4 or BG and EL modules of inventive variant in Fig. 1). There is no hint or any suggestion in U.S. Patent No. 5,305,199 for automatic recording maximum useful life hardware components of the printer or of recording expiry data of any supplies or operating materials.

Based on the classification of U.S. Patent No. 5,305,199, the most pertinent search may be in class 705, subclass 28.

Finally, the examiner's attention is directed to co-pending U.S. application Serial No. 09/854,523 which discloses and claims related subject matter (Examiner Elizabeth S. Quan).

Respectfully submitted,

DYKEMA GOSSETT PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard H. Tushin', written over a horizontal line.

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